

The Invasion of Italy

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remark that it was this Emperor, of whom no one has a charitable word to say, who restored to the Christians at Rome the church buildings and property which had been confiscated to the State by the edicts of Diocletian and Galerius. Neither Eusebius nor Lactantius mentions this, but the fact is clear from a passage in St. Augustine, who says that the first act of the Roman Christians on regaining possession of their cemetery was to bring back the body of Bishop Eusebius, who had died in exile in Sicily. Nor did Maxentius's political attitude towards the other Augusti betray indications of incompetence or want of will. He was ambitious—a trait common to most Roman Emperors and certainly shared by all his colleagues*. There was no cohesion among the four Augusti; there was no one much superior to the others in influence and prestige. Constantine and Maxentius feared and suspected each other in the West, just as Licinius and Maximin Daza feared and suspected each other in the East. When the two latter agreed that the Hellespont should divide their territories, Licinius, who had lost Asia Minor by the bargain, made overtures of alliance to Constantine. It was arranged that Licinius should marry Constantia, the sister of the Augustus of Gaul. Naturally, therefore, Maximin Daza turned towards Maxentius and sent envoys asking for alliance and friendship. Lactantius adds the curious phrase that Maximin's letter was couched in a tone of familiarity * and says that Maxentius was as eager

Scribit edam familiar iter*